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Seventieth session

Summary record of the 1609th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 6 July 2018, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Ninth periodic report of Mexico

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Ninth periodic report of Mexico (*continued*) (CEDAW/C/MEX/9; CEDAW/C/MEX/Q/9 and CEDAW/C/MEX/Q/9/Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Mexico took places at the Committee table.*

Articles 7 to 9 (*continued*)

2. **Ms. Schulz** said that, although birth registration rates were generally high, they were much lower for persons from indigenous communities and persons on low incomes, possibly because the procedure for registering births and applying for birth certificates was quite complicated. Parents whose children had been born in the United States of America and had subsequently returned to Mexico had difficulty obtaining birth certificates, or having their children's original birth certificates recognized, unless they had registered their births in a Mexican consulate prior to leaving the United States. Since that requirement had prevented many children from enrolling in school, she asked whether the 2016 agreement between the United States and Mexico, which had been intended to simplify the registration process, had been a success, and whether it had facilitated the recognition of birth certificates issued in the United States. The Committee would also be interested to learn whether the 2016 agreement applied to those children who had returned to Mexico before its entry into force and whether a programme was in place to clear the backlog of unregistered births and ensure that the children concerned were issued with birth certificates.

3. **Mr. Lara Cabrera** (Mexico) said that the issue of birth registration, including the registration of the Mexican diaspora through consular services in the United States, was a priority for the Government. Mexican consulates had now been empowered to issue civil registration documents and a number of campaigns had been carried out in the United States to encourage Mexican citizens to make use of the consular registration services. It was no longer necessary for birth certificates issued in the United States to be stamped, which simplified matters for Mexicans returning home from north of the border.

4. **Ms. Maccise Duaye** (Mexico) said that an unprecedented number of women had participated in the elections that had taken place in July 2018. Over 50 per cent of the candidates who had stood for election had been women and, as a result, some 48 per cent of the members of the Chamber of Deputies and 49 per cent of the members of the Senate were women. Furthermore, in the 30 local councils where elections had taken place, an average of 46 per cent of council seats had been won by women. However, women were underrepresented in electoral contests for which gender parity was not obligatory, including in the elections for the post of President and for the 11 Governor posts.

5. In the 13 districts where over 70 per cent of the population belonged to indigenous communities, political parties had been required to put forward an equal number of men and women candidates from those communities. Consequently, five indigenous women had won election to the Congress of the Union. In addition, as a result of affirmative actions taken at the local level, indigenous women had been elected to the local congress in two federative entities.

6. The Government did not have any information on the number of women candidates belonging to vulnerable groups as political parties were not legally required to provide such information. A voluntary questionnaire on membership of such groups had been submitted to the political parties but only a relatively small percentage of candidates had completed and returned it.

7. The Government possessed disaggregated data on ways in which women faced discrimination at various stages of the electoral process. In order to combat such discrimination, it had produced guidelines encouraging political parties to refrain from reinforcing gender stereotypes in political advertising. As a result, the number of

complaints received about discriminatory advertising had fallen significantly in comparison with previous elections. When complaints had been received about a particular advertisement, steps had been taken to withdraw it from circulation. At the request of the Government, the political parties, in collaboration with UN-Women, had established a protocol aimed at tackling political violence within political parties. Eight of the nine main political parties in the country had now subscribed to that protocol and steps would be taken to assess the extent to which it was effective in protecting women against discrimination.

8. Research indicated that women candidates received fewer resources and less media coverage during political campaigns. In order to rectify that imbalance, specific recommendations for measures to be taken by the political parties and the electoral authorities had been drawn up.

9. **Ms. Bracho Alegría** (Mexico) said that the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary had issued 99 judgments in respect of cases of political violence in recent years. In 88 of those cases, the protocol for responding to political violence against women had been invoked. The Tribunal had issued opinions and established jurisprudence defining political violence, which would make it easier for future cases of such violence to be tried by the Tribunal and by other courts. In 13 of the cases tried by the Tribunal, measures to protect women candidates had been established. In order to raise awareness of the protocol, face-to-face training sessions aimed at electoral officers, women candidates, human rights defenders and the general public had been carried out in 20 states. In addition, over 7,000 persons had enrolled on an online course on the prevention of political violence. A special public defence service for indigenous peoples, which reported to the Tribunal, had provided assistance to over 200 indigenous women whose rights had been violated.

10. For the first time in its history, the Electoral Tribunal had recently disqualified two mayors who had engaged in acts of political violence from standing for re-election. The Tribunal had also recently established a national network of over 900 women human rights defenders to deal with cases of political violence.

11. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that, in the recent elections, greater parity among candidates had resulted in more equal representation of men and women in the upper and lower chambers and in local government. However, women were still underrepresented in the executive branch, the judiciary and the autonomous state bodies. In order to remedy that situation, it would be necessary to promote and reinforce the notion of gender equality in politics through legislation.

Articles 10 to 14

12. **Ms. Verges** said she was concerned that girls and women still tended to study subjects traditionally associated with their gender rather than courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. She was also concerned to note that training courses for teachers failed to address the issue of gender; that guidelines on the prevention and detection of sexual harassment and violence in schools were often not applied, resulting in high levels of sexual harassment and violence at all levels of the education system; that the rate at which pregnant girls dropped out of school remained high; and that insufficient efforts had been made to assess the impact of scholarships intended to ensure that pregnant girls and young mothers could remain in the education system.

13. Noting the lack of robust integrated programmes addressing the various technical and financial challenges facing the education system, she asked what steps would be taken to improve the system under the new education model introduced in 2017; whether sufficient funds were available for the model's implementation; and whether the Government would consider implementing legislation stipulating that 8 per cent of the gross domestic product should be allocated to the education sector. She invited the delegation to describe the action that would be taken to eliminate school fees, which represented a barrier to education for many families belonging to vulnerable groups, and the measures that would be used to address disparities in the use of new technology and gaps in educational attainment between the different states, urban and rural areas, and boys and girls, including gaps and disparities affecting indigenous and Afrodescendent girls, girls with disabilities and the children of disappeared persons in particular. Lastly, she

asked what steps would be taken under the new education model to promote educational attainment among members of vulnerable groups and to assess and follow up on the many programmes and projects established in the area of education.

14. **Ms. Manalo**, noting that only around 44 per cent of women of working age were in employment, said that she wished to know what steps were being taken to ensure that men and women were more equally represented in the workforce. In view of the gender pay gap that existed in all employment sectors in Mexico, she asked what steps were being taken to reduce the gap, and whether the Government recognized and upheld the principle of equal pay for equal work, as mentioned in the report (CEDAW/C/MEX/9, para. 161), or the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, which would be more beneficial for the rights of women. She also wished to know why over 10 per cent of women were habitually asked to take pregnancy tests by their employers; why women domestic workers were not covered by key pieces of labour legislation, including the Federal Labour Act and the Social Security Act; and what obstacles were preventing the State party from ratifying the International Labour Organization (ILO) Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). Lastly, she asked what measures would be taken to promote, provide and protect employment opportunities for indigenous women, women with disabilities and women refugees.

15. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that she would welcome further information on teenage pregnancy rates, particularly the rates for girls between 10 and 14 years of age, since it was difficult to determine, from the figures available, how far rates had actually fallen. She wondered whether the outcomes of the national strategy for the prevention of adolescent pregnancy had been assessed; whether the strategy received the funding that it required to operate effectively at a local level; and whether rates of teenage pregnancy had fallen consistently in every part of the country. Noting that a significant proportion of women had reported having suffered ill-treatment while giving birth, she asked for information on obstacles to the effective delivery and ongoing improvement of health services at all stages of pregnancy and childbirth. It would be interesting to learn whether plans were in place to carry out a new survey of women's experiences of childbirth.

16. The Committee wished to know whether measures would be taken to standardize and ensure the availability of abortion services throughout the country and whether legislation providing access to abortion services for women who had been raped was effectively implemented. In view of the fact that physicians' right to raise a conscientious objection to performing an abortion would shortly be enshrined in law, she asked what steps would be taken to ensure access to abortion in cases where physicians raised such an objection and what effect the legislation in question would have on the universal availability of abortion services.

17. **Ms. Morales Garza** (Mexico) said that the Government was aware that educational establishments should be free from violence, harassment and abuse. For that reason, all possible measures were taken to ensure that girls and boys could develop to their full potential, irrespective of their origins, language or ability. The Government's educational policies were implemented by means of programmes, plans and training activities and mechanisms for detecting and responding to allegations of abuse were in place. A body of laws had been adopted that was designed to promote peaceful and convivial learning environments in all educational establishments. The National Programme for Harmonious Relations at School had been successful in promoting harmonious relations and equality between boys and girls in around a quarter of the schools where assessments had been carried out. As well as promoting academic achievement, national education policies were intended to enhance students' social and emotional capacities and to identify students or groups who were at risk.

18. Violence in schools, and mechanisms for dealing with such violence, were addressed in teacher training programmes. At the upper secondary level, half of school scholarships were reserved for girls and almost 65 per cent of funds invested at the national level was allocated to schools in rural and indigenous areas. The success of literacy programmes was reflected by the fact that literacy rates were much higher among girls under 15 years of age than among women over 50 years of age, who had not benefited from such programmes.

The proportions of indigenous boys and girls who completed primary school and secondary school were 1 per cent and 12 per cent below the national averages, respectively.

19. Guidelines for detecting, preventing and addressing child sexual abuse, bullying and ill-treatment had been implemented in all 32 federative entities. Safety protocols had been established for middle and upper secondary schools and protocols for preventing, addressing and punishing sexual harassment and harassment in the workplace, including in the civil service, had been established. A number of higher education establishments had taken steps to establish violence-free zones and a significant level of funding had been allocated to the "*ConstruyeT*" (Build Yourself Up) programme, which covered 10,000 educational establishments at the upper secondary level.

20. **Ms. Eternod Arámburu** (Mexico) said that the Government had developed a national strategy to combat teenage pregnancy. The strategy was based on painstaking analysis and involved coordinating the efforts of over 20 federal government bodies, 4 international organizations and a number of civil society organizations. One of the main goals of the strategy, which incorporated key indicators that would enable its outcomes to be measured, was to establish working groups responsible for implementing the plans and programmes associated with it in every state. Action was being taken to raise awareness of the strategy among children and adolescents, and also among parents and guardians, who shared responsibility for their children's sex education. The strategy included a specific plan to prevent teenage mothers from having a second child and from dropping out of school.

21. Data gathered by the Government indicated that, in 2017, rates of teenage pregnancy among girls aged between 10 and 14 years old and girls aged between 15 and 19 years old were around 15 per cent lower than the corresponding rates measured between 2014 and 2016. However, the rate at which teenage pregnancy was falling varied from one federative entity to another. All federative entities were required to submit reports on the progress that they had made in reducing teenage pregnancy and, in 2017, 30 such reports had been received. In accordance with the national strategy, it was recommended that federative entities should abolish legal exemptions enabling adolescents under the age of 18 to marry. To date, only two federative entities had failed to implement that recommendation. Training on the national strategy had been provided to relevant staff in all 32 federative entities and a total of 14 protocols on the prevention of teenage pregnancy had been established. Pregnancy prevention and care programmes were also offered by civil society organizations.

22. **Ms. del Río Zolezzi** (Mexico) said that almost 6,000 units providing a wide range of contraceptives and guidance on birth control to adolescents had been established throughout the country. Such units were available in 75 per cent of the country's municipalities, including areas with rural and indigenous populations. Between 2016 and 2017, more than 2.5 million people had used the services, the majority of them women, and over 700,000 adolescents had received information on how to avoid unwanted pregnancies. According to figures from 2017, 500,000 women under the age of 20 were active users of contraception, an increase of 47 per cent since 2012.

23. In order to raise awareness of obstetric violence, the Ministry of Health and the Mexican Social Security Institute provided training to staff at the health-care centres and hospitals where large numbers of births took place and where complaints had been most frequently received. Approximately 18,000 health-care workers had received training across the country. Surveys to assess the incidence of obstetric violence would continue to be conducted, the next one being scheduled for 2022.

24. An amendment to the General Health Act to permit conscientious objection to performing abortions and providing contraception had been published in May 2018. The corresponding regulations were currently being drafted and would be completed in August 2018. So as to protect the rights of patients, the new rules would permit medical staff to object to performing certain types of procedure but would not permit them to raise objections in specific individual cases. The National Human Rights Commission had filed a lawsuit against the amendment before the Supreme Court on grounds of unconstitutionality.

25. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that abortion and contraception remained a politically controversial and divisive issue. Nevertheless, progress had been made through the General Victims Act and the General Rights of Children and Adolescents Act, as well as at the state level.

26. **Ms. Luna Ramos** (Mexico) said that the Supreme Court had ruled in favour of decriminalizing abortion in the Federal District. However, many other states had expressly legislated against decriminalization, as they were free to do under the federal system of government. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court had found the application of Mexican official standard NOM-046-SSA2-2005, which permitted, inter alia, the use of the morning-after pill by victims of sexual violence, to be constitutional. Furthermore, the Supreme Court had ruled, in two landmark judgments, that denying abortions to rape victims violated the Constitution.

27. **Mr. Arellano Cuán** (Mexico) said that the right to equality in employment was enshrined in the Constitution and in the Federal Labour Act. In 2015, Mexican official standard NMX-R-025-SCFI-2015 had introduced a certification scheme for companies that had gender-inclusive practices and, although adherence to the standard was not obligatory, many companies sought to comply, reflecting a positive change in the country's business culture. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security planned to hold 84 work fairs before the end of 2018, which would offer 12,000 employment opportunities specifically to women. As part of efforts to advance women's employment rights, the Ministry had worked with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to design a guide on breastfeeding in the workplace aimed at companies and institutions. The Ministry also aimed to increase the number of day-care centres and to ensure that they were accessible to all working mothers and fathers.

28. In the period 2012–2018, 13 million women had found work via the National Employment Service. Women looking for employment using the Service had, on average, completed two or three more years of education than men, which was indicative of the advancements made in women's rights in Mexico. The years 2005–2017 had seen a significant increase in the number of women accessing highly skilled sectors of the labour force. For example, there had been an 18 per cent annual increase in the number of women in the medical profession, a 14 per cent increase in the transport sector and a 6 per cent rise in professional services. The university enrolment rate for women now equalled that of men.

29. It was against the law for employers to require employees to undergo pregnancy tests. To improve enforcement of the law, the Government needed to raise women's awareness of the law and ensure that they knew where to file complaints. Federal labour laws expressly laid down punishments for employers who engaged in discriminatory practices. The Federal Act on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination also established a procedure for filing complaints of labour discrimination, under which the victims could be reinstated and reparations awarded. Complaints were heard by the National Council for the Prevention of Discrimination.

30. The Government planned to ratify the ILO Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security issued certificates to companies that sought to promote the reconciliation of work and family life. To date, certificates had been awarded to 2,500 companies that offered flexible working hours, for example, or encouraged men to play a more active role in housework and childcare. In addition, new legal provisions granted fathers up to five days of paternity leave. Civil legislation contained provisions on responsible paternity which, inter alia, required fathers to contribute to childcare expenses and established a prison sentence of up to 5 years for fathers who failed to do so.

31. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that she wished to know what measures the State had taken to combat intersectional discrimination within the health sector and, in particular, what resources and training programmes were available to safeguard the rights of women with disabilities, including those from rural and indigenous communities. She would appreciate an explanation as to the progress made in recognizing the sexual needs of persons with disabilities and the obstacles that still existed.

32. Lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex women had specific needs in terms of health care. Many transgender women who worked in the sex industry suffered from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS. She would therefore be interested to learn about the steps taken to address the needs of those women and to prevent, address and punish medical malpractice, including the genital mutilation of intersex persons.

33. **Ms. Ferreyra Beltrán** (Mexico) said that a law applicable in all states prohibited discrimination and guaranteed equal opportunities for all. A mechanism also existed whereby victims of discrimination were able to lodge complaints. The majority of the complaints received thus far had been submitted by persons with disabilities and related to accessibility in the workplace. Mexican official standard NMX-R-025-SCFI-2015 required companies to make their workspaces accessible to persons with disabilities and recommended a 5 per cent quota for women with disabilities in the workforce.

34. **Ms. del Río Zolezzi** (Mexico) said that public officials received training in areas including human rights, gender diversity and inclusiveness to guarantee the rights of women with disabilities, including those from indigenous and Afro-Mexican communities. Mexico recognized the sexual rights of women with disabilities and had made progress in that regard.

35. Experts from various institutions had drafted a protocol on medical care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons and persons with intersex characteristics. Under the protocol, doctors were not permitted to perform surgery on infants. Nonetheless, the protocol had yet to be incorporated into the national health system. Transgender women had access to services to detect, diagnose and treat sexually transmitted infections. Such services were financed by a special fund and medicines were provided free of charge. A register of those undergoing treatment revealed that 689 transgender women were receiving antiretroviral drugs. The actual figure was thought to be higher given that many transgender women were still officially men as their identity documents had not yet been changed.

36. **Ms. Morales Garza** (Mexico) said that plans and programmes for the promotion of equality and human rights were regularly evaluated by higher education institutions, the Chamber of Deputies, the National Institute for Educational Assessment and the National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy. The plans and programmes covered the social, emotional and biological aspects of sexuality. A booklet on the rights of young people gave them the tools to identify sexual violence and stereotypes and combat machismo. A network of mentors was available in the public school system and in the technical baccalaureate and technical vocational systems. At present, of the students enrolled on courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, 36 per cent were women or girls, and equal numbers of male and female students were enrolled in computing courses. The number of female researchers had increased by 36 per cent, while 40 per cent of students attending polytechnic universities were women. Over the past 5 years, 92,000 scholarships had been awarded to pregnant adolescent girls to encourage them to remain in education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education had a sectoral agenda to promote the development of persons with disabilities.

37. **Mr. Arellano Cuán** (Mexico) said that the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples ran a programme to improve the productivity of indigenous women that centred on providing financial support and training to enable them to maintain a reasonable standard of living. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security had introduced the "Gilberto Rincón Gallardo" certification scheme for companies that recruited persons with disabilities. It was currently processing the 1,500 applications it had received and would award the certificates in November 2018.

38. The Government was working to ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Both male and female domestic workers had certain rights under Mexican law, although those rights fell short of the standards of ILO Convention No. 189. The Government was considering the measures necessary to advance the rights of domestic workers with a view to ratifying that Convention in the near future.

39. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that the National Council for the Development and Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities worked with companies and civil society

organizations to develop employment opportunities for persons with disabilities in various sectors, including banking.

40. **Mr. Robledo Flores** (Mexico) said that the Government had established the programme to improve the production and productivity of indigenous peoples, a component of which was dedicated to indigenous women, in 2014. More than 80,000 women had benefited from the 12,000 projects that had been set up. The programme guaranteed jobs and income for indigenous women, thereby empowering them and enhancing their economic independence. Under another programme to be rolled out in 2018, development agencies would be set up to provide skills training for indigenous women's community organizations, specifically in water collection and food production, and to help them to make the move from traditional wood-burning stoves to gas or electric cookers so as to prevent disease.

41. **Ms. Bethel** said that, to improve access to paid work for rural and indigenous women, and opportunities for economic, social and cultural participation for all women in general, improved access to childcare, credit, training, land and property was required. In that context, she wished to know what action the Government was taking to increase access to land, property and credit for rural women; whether the PROSPERA social inclusion programme incorporated a gender perspective and whether it brought long-term benefits, particularly for indigenous and rural women and female-headed households; and whether the beneficiaries had been consulted as to how the programme might be improved. She would also like to know what steps had been taken to bring more indigenous women into leadership positions and how women's access to the labour market, including higher paid sectors and decent working conditions, might be improved.

42. Given that Mexican women faced one of the highest burdens of unpaid domestic and care work of all member States of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, and that situation impeded their economic participation and empowerment, she wondered whether the State party planned to adopt policies that would improve women's access to public sector care and support services. Since the exigencies of domestic work also made it difficult for rural and poor women to engage in recreational and cultural life, it would likewise be interesting to know whether the State party had adopted gender-responsive policies in culture and sport with a view to empowering all women, and particularly rural and indigenous women. If so, what results had been achieved?

43. Lastly, noting that the poorest women were often disproportionately affected by the impact of natural disasters and climate change but that women also had a key role in preventing, managing and responding to such events, she asked how the State party intended to build on the Committee's general recommendation No. 37 and other international frameworks in order to ensure that women were involved in risk prevention and that risk reduction policies were gender-sensitive.

44. **Ms. Song** asked whether rural and indigenous women enjoyed the same rights to land as men and whether there were any barriers to female landownership. She noted that the State party's replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/MEX/Q/9/Add.1, para. 170) indicated only how many women had benefitted from certificates and titles issued by the National Agrarian Land Register and authorizations for production projects in 2017. Equivalent figures for the numbers of male beneficiaries were therefore needed. She would also like to know whether procedures for issuing certificates and authorizing projects incorporated a gender perspective and what reasons were responsible for the gender disparity in land tenure.

45. Since, according to alternative sources, extractive industries in indigenous territories had reduced rural women's access to land, additional data should be provided on the impact of such industries on communities, and particularly women. Had the Government taken any action to mitigate the negative impacts? Noting that alternative sources also referred to a lack of support for indigenous communities in the practice and dissemination of their culture, she asked what steps the Government had taken to address the needs of indigenous women as the primary bearers and transmitters of cultural practices. Further noting that the Land Act had been amended with a view to increasing women's participation in decision-making, she asked whether the gender composition of the Commission on Communal Land

and the Supervisory Council had changed as a result; what the current gender balance was; whether gender equality training had been provided to all members; and whether there were any other channels through which rural and indigenous women could involve themselves in local decision-making. Lastly, it would be interesting to learn about any opportunities for political participation available to migrants, including migrant women, and about any one-stop shop services through which migrants could receive information on accommodation, job opportunities and access to justice, for example.

46. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that the PROSPERA programme had undergone changes and that studies had been carried out to assess the extent to which it incorporated a gender perspective. Women had taken ownership of the programme and nearly all beneficiaries were indeed women. The programme covered health and education and provided insurance cover for families in the event of maternal death. Credit was available through the State-owned rural development bank, Financiera Rural, and significant progress had been made in making soft loans available for rural women, including small-scale producers, at a lower interest rate than for men. Moreover, it was no longer necessary for women to obtain their husbands' signatures to access loans.

47. **Ms. López Barajas** (Mexico) said that, although amendments to article 47 of the Land Act provided for affirmative action to promote women's land rights and access to positions on community councils, most women who had been canvassed by the Inter-Agency Working Group on Rural Women to ascertain their opinion on the new measure had indicated that they were not in a position to access such opportunities and required more training. They had also indicated that more work needed to be done to change attitudes among men, since obtaining community support for women in decision-making roles was problematic. Although women were involved in supervising rural social programmes, securing the active participation of indigenous women remained a challenge.

48. With regard to addressing women's vulnerability in disaster situations, a gender perspective had been incorporated into national programmes tackling climate change and forest degradation, amongst other issues. However, the Government acknowledged that much remained to be done in order to ensure that women genuinely benefitted from such programmes.

49. **Mr. Robledo Flores** (Mexico) said that community engagement, and the engagement of women organization's in particular, was crucial to the success of projects promoting women's employment and income generation and that the Government endeavoured to deploy good practices of that kind in the development of all public policies affecting indigenous women. In the field of education, for example, prior consultations had been conducted prior to policy reforms in order to take account of indigenous communities' views and needs. As regards land tenure, in 2016, article 37 of the Land Act had been amended to stipulate that women should account for no less than 40 per cent of the members of all communal land authorities.

50. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would like to know whether the impact of the tertiary education opportunities available under the PROSPERA programme had been evaluated; and, if so, what conclusions had been drawn.

51. **Ms. Song** asked whether the Government regularly sent experts into rural areas to provide free on-the-spot guidance and training to rural women.

52. **Ms. Eternod Arámburu** (Mexico) said that, to relieve women of the huge burden of unpaid care work, the Government would need to use targeted strategies for the different population groups concerned, which included older persons, children and the sick. To that end, it was working to reinforce care sector infrastructures, for example, by increasing the availability of day-care centres, and to find ways to achieve a more even distribution of the burden of care between the public and private sectors, and between families and communities.

53. **Ms. Schulz** said that she would like to know whether the Government was planning to put an end to the automatic detention of women asylum seekers, as provided under the Migration Act, and to give all women and girls access to asylum procedures by waiving the current 30-day time limit. She also wondered whether it would be increasing the number of

offices of the Mexican Commission for Refugee Assistance, and its budget and human resource allocations, with a view to improving processing times and service quality, better protecting women and girls from the risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and ensuring that all such cases were duly investigated and prosecuted; and whether it would be extending the detainee release programme launched in Mexico City in 2016 nationwide. In addition, would the Government be taking steps to give women asylum seekers the right to work and access to health services and housing?

54. **The Chair** said that, with Mr. Ruiz Cabañas' agreement, the answers to Ms. Schulz's questions should be provided in writing.

55. **Mr. Robledo Flores** (Mexico) said that the Government held consultations with indigenous communities with a view to obtaining their prior consent for all extractive industry projects and, together with representatives of indigenous communities, had drafted a consultation protocol that met with international standards. Various international observers had participated in past consultations, including representatives of the United Nations, ILO and civil society organizations.

56. **Mr. Lara Cabrera** (Mexico) said that many initiatives designed to help migrants had been launched in the United States of America, including a one-stop shop for women offering advice on education and health, among other issues. In Mexico, training was provided to community leaders in places with high migrant populations; an information campaign was being run to give visibility to female migrants' contributions to society; medical care was provided in cases of rape, for example; and a successful migrant assistance programme had been run in conjunction with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The Government was continually strengthening the resources allocated to the various bodies that dealt with refugee issues.

57. **Mr. Avante Juárez** (Mexico) said that the body responsible for processing asylum applications had increased its staff by 70 per cent in 2018 and had launched a programme to significantly decrease processing times. Asylum seekers and refugees were now provided with an identity document that gave them access to employment, financial support, health and education, for example. In addition, an expert working group set up in 2017 was working to ensure the incorporation of a gender perspective in all policies protecting migrants and duly trained refugee protection groups, known as Beta Groups, were now operating in 22 municipalities and had assisted over a million women since 2013.

Articles 15 and 16

58. **Ms. Narain** said that she would like to know whether the four federative entities that had previously permitted certain exemptions to the prohibition of child marriage had now removed those provisions; and, in light of reports of girls being forced to marry their kidnappers or rapists, what steps the State party had taken to address cultural attitudes and enforce prohibition. In addition, she asked whether complaints mechanisms were available in schools and hospitals; whether anonymous warnings were heeded; whether cases of bigamy involving child brides were investigated and prosecuted; whether child marriages were officially registered; and whether child brides had rights, notably in terms of divorce. More generally, it would be useful to know whether divorce was available equally to both sexes and whether all girls and women, but in particular girl brides, could fully exercise their rights under the Convention, regardless of their marital status.

59. She would also like to know whether legislative amendments had been passed that would broaden the definition of communal property and whether the amendments would be enacted throughout the country. Under what circumstances was a woman not entitled to alimony? And what would the State party do to ensure that women were not disadvantaged by the distribution of property on marriage breakdown? Lastly, she wondered whether judges who had made sexist remarks and issued sexist judgments were duly disciplined; whether it could be determined that such attitudes resulted in rulings in favour of the husband in divorce cases or the father in custody cases; and whether the planned law on responsible fatherhood had now been passed.

60. **Ms. Alonso Pesado** (Mexico) said that laws had been harmonized in 28 of the federative entities. As 3 out of the 4 federative entities that had not yet removed exemptions

to the prohibition of child marriage had had recent changes in government, work to ensure harmonization should resume in the near future. However, prohibition alone was insufficient; policies and initiatives to nurture cultural change, such as awareness-raising campaigns, were needed. For example, in the past year, the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples had reached out to indigenous women and girls via radio broadcasts.

61. **Ms. Luna Ramos** (Mexico) said that the Supreme Court was expected to issue a ruling declaring child marriage to be unconstitutional in the near future. All courts were working to ensure that women's rights were recognized, and were reflected in judgments and decisions. Court officials were receiving training in how to avoid and address sexist attitudes and judges could be disciplined in certain circumstances, including in cases of negligence. More generally, fundamental rights prevailed over customary law.

62. **Mr. Ruiz Cabañas** (Mexico) said that all questions that it had not been possible to answer during the meeting would be answered in writing.

63. **Ms. Eternod Arámburu** (Mexico) said that the Government had made significant progress in implementing its gender equality policy but acknowledged the huge challenges it still faced in eradicating and punishing violence against women and girls. It would continue to shore up its legislative framework so as to guarantee all women's rights. It was aware that the gender equality budget was insufficient, and states needed to invest resources in implementing equality policies and the policy to prevent, eradicate and punish violence against women. It was also aware that improved mechanisms for the advancement of women were needed at all levels of government. Above all, however, it was aware that, without the full participation of women, the country would not advance.

64. **Ms. Gastélum Bajo** (Mexico) said that many women and girls in Mexico did not have a voice, but that the Government would continue working to ensure that their rights under the Convention prevailed.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.